

**TOWN OF STOKESDALE**  
**PO BOX 465**  
**STOKESDALE, NORTH CAROLINA**

The regular meeting of the Stokesdale Town Council was held in the Town Hall at 8416 US Highway 158 on Thursday, June 18, 2009.

Mayor Pro Tem Mickie Habbrook called the meeting to order at 7:32 PM. The following members of Council were present: Mickie Habbrook, James Attaway, Cheryl Steele and Norman Cook. Mayor Randle L. Jones arrived at 7:35pm.

Others present included: Guilford County Sheriff's Deputy Steve Christman, Town Attorney William B. Trevorrow, and Town Clerk/Finance Officer Carolyn Joyner.

After the Pledge of Allegiance, Ms. Habbrook asked if any citizen wished to be added to the agenda. No one came forward.

Mr. Attaway made a motion to accept the minutes as presented and waive the reading of the minutes. Ms. Steele seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the minutes of the regular meeting of the Town Council meeting held on May 21, 2009 were approved.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Report from Guilford County Sheriff's Department:** Deputy Christman reported three DWI's, one residential breaking and entering (B&E), one business B&E, one B&E of a car and two assaults.

**REZONING CASE #09-05-STPL-01805: RS-30 to CU-NB.** 7805 NC Highway 68 North: Located on the west side of NC Highway 68 North, approximately 200 feet north of Prince Edward Road (SR 2036) in Oak Ridge Township. Being Guilford County Tax Map 01-0060, Block 1113, Parcel 001, approximately 1.0 acre. Owned by Willard M. and Barbara Tucker and Edwin J. and Marie C. McMichael.

Ms. Habbrook noted that the rezoning case had been withdrawn by the applicant. Mayor Jones arrived at this point of the meeting.

**Town Hall Rental Proposals:** Mayor Jones indicated that Council had several proposals to consider for a Town Hall. The options were presented as follows:

- SouthRich which includes rental in their building( Stokesdale Business Center)
  1. \$1,500 per month for up to a five year lease
  2. Space in the Business Center Building reserved by Town Hall at \$700 per month
  3. Rental at \$4.75 per foot for unimproved space in the business center
  4. Buy the building for \$1.9 million
  5. Keep the Status quo (the current building)
- T. Cooper James
  1. Proposal to build a free standing building to suit (Town's plans and specifications) and will lease it to the Town at a market rate based on square footage with a purchase option
- Haw River Holdings
  1. Pricing for a 3,058 square foot unit to be leased at \$15 per square foot; Improvements would be additional.
- Build a Town that has been planned
- Stay at the current location and do nothing.

Ms. Steele asked how square feet were in the current Town Hall. The Clerk replied that it contained about 1,100 square feet. Ms. Steele suggested that the option of renting 1,500 square feet rather than 3,000 square feet from Haw River Holdings could be considered. Mayor Jones responded that the issue was not that a new space of 1500 square feet, but space was needed so that if there are planning and zoning issues, then 100 persons could be seated. The Town Hall design would accomplish this and would allow part of the building to be used by the public with the records storage and the remainder of the building being closed. The building could be used for community events, an emergency shelter, and other options. Mayor Jones noted that the Business Center could be purchased at \$1.9 million while the Town Hall would be new with an estimated cost of \$1.4 million. Upgrades would be needed on the Business Center. There are fewer zoning cases now due to the economy and those are generally what causes a full house. It may not be a necessity to rent space at \$700 per month. Mayor Jones noted that the other options for a new facility would still be renting. The advantage of building now is that estimates are coming in low and there were 22 bids submitted on the Park project so the market is competitive now.

Ms. Steele asked what \$1,800 per month would get as far as a mortgage. Mayor Jones said that it may be better to pay for it rather than using revenues to pay interest on a mortgage. The Town would have to have a tight budget. Ms. Steele said that she thought the low interest loans may be available perhaps at 3%. Mayor Jones said that commercial loans may actually be higher. One of the questions that will be asked if the Town applies for a loan is if the Town has a tax so the lenders know they can regain their capital should anything happen. If you apply for some of the government loans, they want you to levy a tax and he did not feel that the Town should levy a tax if it is not needed. Ms. Halbrook said that she felt it would make good sense to pay for it since the Town has money and would not have to go in debt for a building. Mayor Jones noted that everything has been done and suggested that the Town could put the project out to bid and if they came back higher than expected, then Council does not have to accept any of them. Mr. Trevorrow confirmed that this was correct. Mayor Jones said that the project could be put out to bid and it could be paid for out of Town coffers and if the bids come in too high, the project can be negotiated or you can scrap the project and the Town can keep the status quo. Bids are coming in now at reasonable rates and if they were to come in at a reasonable rate, then Council can proceed.

Mr. Cook said that the Town Hall has been a sore thumb for him. He felt that it did not make any sense to put it on Angel Pardue Road now or ever. It would be on a dead end street and no one would ever see it. He said that space in the Business Center could be rented for \$18,000 per year. If you take the income and invest it at 2% per year, you could pay the rent out of it and have \$32,000 left over. He asked if any sensible group would make a decision not to do that. Mayor Jones said that one problem is that you do not know if that will be the rate consistently. Town Hall rent started out as \$200 a month and now it is \$800 a month. Mayor Jones said that at the end, the Town would not own a building and the upgrades that are needed for the building are not included. The Town would have to bring it up to code for public meetings and meet OSHA requirements and have work done on it. He said that he was not saying that it was a bad idea to rent that building but it was not the price that he would prefer. Ms. Halbrook said she felt it was better to own rather than to rent a building.

Mayor Jones said that he disagreed that Angel Pardue was a bad location. He felt that it was an excellent location. It would put governmental agencies in the center of Town and near the school. It will bring law enforcement to that area. You can oversee the park from the building. The building is designed to be expanded if it is ever needed. The architects looked at that so that if the Town grows, then it can be expanded. If you rent or buy an existing building then you are limited as far as expansion and if you ever have other departments, you will need space for them. With the 25 acres, you will have the park and room for a building there. The building could possibly be trimmed down some more. He said that he would be in favor putting it at that location and building it now while the park is being built and it may be more cost effective to do it now. The building has been designed for use by the public and being on a dead end road may not be a bad thing since it is next to a residential community and near citizens where government should be. Its presence near the school would bring in more security for the school with the presence of law enforcement. It is just a block off of the main highway and there are advantages there. He said there was nothing wrong with others' logic but he felt in the long run it was better to own than to rent. If we are going to rent, he would just as soon stay here until council moves forward on a project. He would not be in

favor of anything that would deplete the coffers to the point that it necessitate a tax or to get into something that we cannot pay for or over-extend the Town with debt. He said that Stokesdale is the only Town that did not levy a tax when the sales and use tax was taken away and continues to not have a tax and still provide services. The Town helped pay for the Fire Station, bought a fire truck, bought computers for the school, built walking tracks, and put in lights, shelter and improvements at the ballpark. The Town has maintained the law enforcement which has reduced crime and some unsavory places that existed when it was first started are no longer here. Planning & zoning has been provided and the Town does not levy a tax. Animal control and elections are paid for by the Town.

Mayor Jones said there were some good proposals including staying at the current location. Some of the work on a Town Hall may dovetail with the construction of the Park and be cost effective. Because of the competitiveness of the market, it is a good time to build. It is worth getting the bids and then Council see if we can move forward with the project. It may stimulate the economy. A Kernersville company is building the park and local people may be working on the project.

Mr. Attaway said that he was not sure that the location was a detriment to the project and that he would favor staying here and put out bid feelers. Mr. Trevorrow said that if Council would need to decide if they want to modify the plans that they already have for a Town Hall. The existing specifications that exist with the architect have already been discussed. If there are significant changes they need to be conveyed to the architects so they know how to revise the plans before it goes out to bid. Mayor Jones suggested using the existing specifications.

Bill Lemmons, 8306 Newberry Street, said that the \$1.9 million price for the Business Center would probably be negotiable. He was concerned about the amount of square footage in the Business Center as compared to the amount that would be available at the new location. The extra space at the park may be needed in the future to expand the park itself. He said that the cost of maintenance on the Park alone is not known. The maintenance alone on the park may cause a tax and this should be looked at. Less revenue is coming in. He felt that the maintenance costs of the Park alone are going to surprise a lot of people. He said that people in the community should be asked what they want and not just the dozen people that show up at the meeting.

Mayor Jones said that planning was done over a period of years at public meetings and the public was invited to come and give ideas. The Town Hall was designed based on ideas and input from the public on the needs of the community. It was designed so that it can be used for other functions. He said that public meetings were held over a two year period on the Park design and the Town Hall design. Mr. Lemmons asked why a survey could not be sent out to survey the citizens. Mayor Jones said that Council was elected to make certain decisions and this had been done by holding public meetings. A survey does not have to be sent out on every decision made. There were notices in the newspaper asking people to come in and tell Council what they wanted and some emails were submitted and the current plans are the result. The survey on the park was required as a part of the grant process.

Pam Lemmons, 8306 Newberry Street, said that Mayor Jones had promised at one point that the park would be done first and then find out what the costs were going to be and how they would be paid for before building a Town Hall. The economy has changed. She asked if there is an amount of money that the Town has to keep in the bank to remain as a Town. Mayor Jones said that there is an amount that the Town must maintain. The Finance Officer said that the Town was well over the required amount. Ms. Lemmons noted that there is also the possibility that infrastructure maintenance may be passed down to the Town and the Town may have to pay for things that it does not want to pay for. She asked for Council to reconsider a community type of building where kids can come and play and a multi- purpose room where podiums can be pulled in when needed and not a formal town hall.

Kathleen Hommel, Deer Path Court, said that she was in agreement for what Council is doing. She felt that the rental fees for the current building and \$1.9 million for a building that has to be renovated were high. It would be better to wait and to build a new Town Hall. She said that she lives near the Dollar General and observed that the land is very low in that area and it constantly collects water. It would be a wet area for a

building. It would not be conducive to having meetings with the truck traffic and the number of accidents at the NC 65 & US Hwy 158 intersection. Truck traffic makes it difficult to hear at the current Town Hall and you would not want to have the same problem at a new Town Hall. The Combs, Inc. property would be a waste of the Town's money to rent 1,500 square feet. She said she liked the way Council was going now. Builders may give a better price now than 3-4 years ago.

Eileen Thiery said that she had supported the idea of the Business Center until she heard the sale price and being a commercial assessor for years, she felt that it was an outlandish amount of money for a building that would need to be rehabilitated and renovated. Many times the renovations can be as costly as the building. She said that she was in favor of a stand alone Town Hall. She said that she felt the Town should have its own identity and should not be affiliated with the Food Lion or Dollar General.

Mayor Jones said that the developers and businessmen that have made proposals did it with the community at heart and have worked to provide options to the Town when we asked what was available. He said that he was appreciative of having options. He said that there were things that he liked about the business center and there are things that need to be done. Weighing the price to buy and refurbish versus the price that we could build for is worthy of looking into. The property and the park will be used by a lot of the youth and the adults of the area. The prospect of doing two projects at time may be difficult. If council is considering a Town Hall, then put the project out to bid and see what the bids are and either accept or reject them. If they are in within the budget then do it, or if not, then keep the status.

Ms. Steele said that Pam Lemmons had a brilliant idea and instead of having Town Hall vacant 28 days out of the month if it could be used during the month. Mayor Jones said that it would not be vacant. It was designed so that the offices could be shut off and the meeting rooms can be used accessed by the public. The entrances and exits are designed for that as well as the meeting room. Mayor Jones said that he goes to court and the way the courtroom looks influences the way people act. Things decided in government are important and there should be some decorum and reverence. There needs to be a balance. Formal has not been an issue here and he does not think it will be an issue now. At some point in time, another building will be needed and it may need to be more of a gymnasium type of building.

Ms. Lemmons asked if that could be done first since there is nothing for the community. The kids will be on the baseball fields and they won't feel comfortable and it really needs to be dressed down.

Ms. Thiery said that she felt that two separate buildings are needed. At one time she had worked in a Town Hall and they were surprised at what went on when children were allowed to use it. The maintenance was quite pricey and they ended up building a separate building.

Joe Thacker, 7936 Lester Road, said that no one can predict the future but he asked Council to look as far into the future to see what conditions and atmosphere and economic conditions as well as the economy of Stokesdale will be in 10 or 15 years. He said that putting a Town Hall where you will have large gathering of athletics and children may not be well suited. It may create problems with traffic and parking. He said that he and others believe that Town Hall should be located between the stoplights at NC 68 and the Bi-Rite.

Mayor Jones said that the architects have it designed the plans with separate entrances/exits for Town Hall and ball fields. He said that the Town has looked for years for space between the stoplights and the last person that said they were going to have property located within 30 days for Council and has not come forward with it. He said that he had been on Council for 18 years and Councils have always looked down the road and that is why we are where we are. The water system has been built and can be expanded. Money has been saved and put away and Council has said no when they would have liked to have said yes. Council planned ahead for when the County would take away the Sales and Use tax distribution and that is why the Town does not have a tax and there is money in the bank.

Mayor Jones made a motion that if Council wishes to go forward with new construction they send the bids out see what the bids are and if they are within an appropriate range that can be met by the budget without

resulting in significant financing and with the funds that are on hand then Council can go forward with the construction and if not Council would have the option of rejecting the bids and looking at one of the other options including the status quo. Mr. Attaway seconded the motion.

Discussion: Mr. Cook said that he keeps hearing no taxes. He asked what is the \$5M that the Town has now if it is not taxes. Mayor Jones said that it is not taxes levied by this Town. Mr. Cook said that Council is spending tax dollars and it does not make any common horse sense to build the building. Mayor Jones asked if it made more sense to buy the Center for \$1.9 million. Mr. Cook said that they say the owners would keep the building up. They would keep it clean and the Town would not have an outlay on that. Mayor Jones said that he had not heard that. Ms. Joyner said that there would be unfitted for the offices and cleaning would not provide and the utility bills would be the Town's responsibility. Mayor Jones said that he has looked at the building and the different areas that are available. Some changes would be necessary. Both the Town and South Rich had inquired about the post office being located there and it will not happen. Ms. Halbrook expressed concerns that should the Town rent a part of the Business Center, and the building was sold or something happened to the owners, the Town's lease may be lost.

Mayor Jones called the question. Council voted 4 to 1 to send out bids on the Town Hall.

ROLL CALL VOTE:	Jones	<u>          Aye          </u>	Halbrook	<u>          Aye          </u>
	Attaway	<u>          Aye          </u>	Steele	<u>          Aye          </u>
	Cook	<u>          No           </u>		

Mayor Jones said to notify Stewart Cooper, Newell, and tell them that Council had voted to go forward with the bids and see what happens.

On behalf of Council, Mayor Jones thanked South Rich, Haw River Holdings, and T. Cooper James & Associates for their offers. They all have points that are good and beneficial to the Town. He said that Council appreciated their willingness to work with them. The proposals would be a fallback position should the bids not work out.

**PUBLIC HEARING and Adoption of 2009-2010 Budget Ordinance #71:** Mayor Jones opened the public hearing at 8:21pm. Ms. Steele asked if the Sheriff's car had been sold. The Clerk indicated that it had not been sold and a definite date for the auction was not known. No one came forward to speak regarding the budget. Mayor Jones declared the public hearing closed. Mayor Jones made a motion to adopt the budget. Mr. Attaway seconded the motion. Mr. Cook expressed concerns over the \$900,000 + that was shown in the budget for a Town Hall. Ms. Joyner said that the amount was designated reserves that have been set aside by each Council since the inception of the Town. Mayor Jones said that it was good that Council did not agree on every issue. He said that Mr. Cook voices an opinion and there are others that feel the same way and Council should not neglect that and should keep it in mind. Mayor Jones called the question. Council voted 5 to 0 to adopt Budget Ordinance as presented.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**Town Park Project:** Mayor Jones noted that Council had tried to hold a ground breaking but a thunderstorm prevented them from holding the event. It may be attempted at another time. There was equipment on the site this morning. Ms. Joyner noted that the official start date was June 15 and the completion date was set as December 11. Construction meetings will be held once a month. Any visitors on the site must register with the job superintendent for safety reasons.

**Disc Golf Presentation:** Tyson Harton, 7914 Daltonshire Drive, and Ritchie Pisor, 8402 Alda Rd, both avid disc golfers, talked about the game and their interest in the course that would be located at the Town Park. They distributed a handout that answered three questions:

1. What is Disc Golf?
2. Who Plays Disc Golf?
3. Why should I play?

They showed various kinds of discs that are used in the game. Both are members of the Professional Disc Golf Association and attend tournaments and play as amateurs. There are about 40,000 members worldwide. Mr. Harton thanked Council for bringing disc golf to Stokesdale. He said that they would be bringing events to Stokesdale. They play at Johnson Street and at Lake Reidsville. Tyson is the Club president for the Lake Reidsville Club. They have an annual event each November at Lake Reidsville. Disc, made of different types of plastic, cost from \$10 to \$15 each. They had examples of them. There is etiquette for conduct on the course and clinics can be held. The 13-year-old world champion lives in High Point. Ms. Steele said that Stokesdale School has a disc golf club that plays every Friday. Richie said to go to Play it Again Sports to buy discs. He left some disc golf magazines for everyone to look at. He said that courses do not have to be in open areas but they can be placed in wooded areas. Tyson said that he felt that people would travel to Stokesdale to play disc golf especially if there was an 18 hole rather than a 9 hole course. He said that he would volunteer to design additional holes for the course. Their group will volunteer to do various things at the Park such as have a clean-up day or have scouts build park benches.

#### **COMMITTEE AND BOARD REPORTS**

**Committee Reports:** No reports were given.

**Departmental and Administrative Reports: Finance Report: May 2009** The Finance Officer reported that assets had increased by about \$9,500 since the previous meeting. Two certificates matured during the month of May. General Fund Certificate #50 was renewed for 6 months at .96%. Water Enterprise Certificate #19 was renewed for 24 months at 3.09%. Interest from both of the certificates was deposited into the General Fund Money Market Savings. The principle amount did not change when the certificate matured. Fees were received from Time Warner Cable in the amount of \$1,514.65. Three magnetic signs were purchased for Council to use for parades at a cost of \$80.06. Other expenditures included an invoice for Law Enforcement in the amount of \$18,585.41 for the first quarter and web site hosting fees of \$167.40. General Fund Account's payable included an invoice from the News & Record for the June Planning Board in the amount of \$250.16.

A deposit of \$1,272.01 was made into the General Fund Savings Account for Greensboro ABC Profits and another deposit totaling \$16,868.10 was made for the ABC tax distribution. Interest paid on certificates of deposit in the amount of \$6,770.19 was deposited into the Money Market Savings Account. One invoice in the amount of \$6,337.92 for Stewart Cooper Newell was paid from the Park Capital Project account. Accounts Payable for the Water Enterprise Account include billing from City of Winston for water in the amount of \$7,585.26 and an invoice from Yates Construction Company, Inc. for \$3,786.88 for the repair of damages that occurred to the water system when Piedmont Natural Gas was working in the area. An insurance claim will be filed. Water Enterprise Checking account transactions were routine. A deposit of \$2,392 was made on May 8 which was the payment for damage to a fire hydrant. Postage in the amount of \$112.00 was purchased to mail out 396 notices about the availability of the annual Consumer Confidence Report. The report is for 2008 and explains the quality of the water and the tests that are performed to monitor the water quality. There were no violations or penalties in 2008.

**Administrative Report – Town Clerk:** The Clerk noted that the Jordan Lake rules have been modified and passed by the House or the Senate and must be returned to the Committee. Randy Billings, PTCOG, reported that the changes are favorable.

**LEGISLATIVE ACTION:** There was no legislative action coming before Council.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Mayor Jones read the announcements listed on the agenda.

**COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR:** Stewart Hommel, Deer Path Court, asked if anything has been found out about the roads at Food Lion. Mayor Jones said that no other information had been received. Mr. Hommel said that the road throws your vehicle. He mentioned that if Council leased a building and made renovations to it, the improvements are a part of the building and would not belong to the Town. It would be a waste of town money to upgrade.

Bill Lemmons said that about three months, an Ordinance Review Committee was set up and one of their  
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tasks was to research a central business district for the town. He wanted to know how many times they had met and what progress had been made. Ms. Steele said that she had discussed it with some committee members and Monday may be a good date to meet. She will look into scheduling the meeting.

Ms. Hommel asked who was contacted in regards to the roads. Mayor Jones said that DOT had been contacted. The Clerk noted that the answer to the question had appeared in the Northwest Observer. No additional information had been received.

Ms. Hommel asked about the enforcement regarding illegal signs. The Clerk responded that County will investigate complaints but there is not sufficient staff for them to go out and remove all improper signs. Strict enforcement would have to be done for the entire county and not just for Stokesdale. The Ordinance says that signs placed on public right of way are public signs.

Pam Lemmons said that there is a difference in ideologies about a building and maybe a buliding will not bring about a tax but the maintenance, upkeep and staff will, at some point in the future, be paying a tax. She feels that it must be a multi-purpose building. She feels that the kids form the park to have use of the building. There is not place here for the community to use and feel comfortable and that can be used for Town meetings because eventually there will be a tax.

Mayor Jones said he appreciated her comments.

Ms. Thiery asked if, because the Town does not have a tax, the Town misses out on grants. Mayor Jones responded that the Town does not get a part of the Sales and Use Tax because the Town does not levy an ad valorem tax. The Sales and Use Tax is distributed based on population or on the ad valorem tax. The County Commissioners decide which method is used. He said that at some point if all of the Towns tax, the County will receive less money than if the per capita method of distribution was used. Mayor Jones said that he felt that Council was cognizant especially in the last few years that Stokesdale has been a community that was dependent on textiles and tobacco. Tobacco has taken a tumultuous hit and people are selling farms to have their retirement. At one time there were three textile companies in Stokesdale. Councils have tried to avoid burdening citizens with a tax. County tax has increased. The State has passed along costs to the County and they have passed them to the Town. Council has been slow and methodical but it has paid off. Research has been done and in the long run it has worked out well.

**COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL:** Ms. Halbrook brought up the matter of liquor by the drink. She said that most people felt that five members of Council should not have made the decision and she would like to see it put on the ballot. Mayor Jones said that a motion could be made to do that. If it is put on the ballot this fall, the Town will not incur the cost of a separate election. He suggested that a time should be selected to place it on the agenda and then Council can discuss it and vote on it. Mr. Trevorrow said that 90 days were needed since it has to be pre-cleared. Ms. Halbrook asked if the decision could be made tonight. Mayor Jones said that he would not because no matter which way it goes, he felt people would be more upset if they are not given a notice of a public hearing. Ms. Thiery asked if Council would need to rent the larger building. Mayor Jones said that we probably would. Mayor Jones said that it could not be put on the ballot during a presidential election year. It would have been a special election that Council would have to pay for elections. He recalled that very few people came out in support of it and a substantial number of people came out in opposition to it. Citizens can petition for it and with enough signatures, and it can be placed on the ballot without the Town Council's approval or Council can vote to place it on the ballot. Mayor Jones said that it was placed on the agenda the last time because a citizen had asked for it to be placed on the agenda. Placing it on the agenda was not Council's endorsement of the matter. Ms. Halbrook made a motion to place on the July agenda, the issue of the voting and having a referendum on liquor by the drink and ABC store. Mr. Attaway said that he would like for Ms. Halbrook to bring some facts to Council such as what it would mean to the Town financially and the impact on the Town. Ms. Thiery asked if the Sheriff would be needed more. Mr. Attaway seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye and the motion carried. Ms. Halbrook said that she thought that it would mean having a good restaurant.

Ms. Halbrook said that it would be revenue for the Town while other things are being taken away and she

did not feel that anyone would sit in a restaurant and get drunk because of what they charge for a drink. Pam Lemmons said you can purchase beer and wine in Stokesdale now and there can be bars without having liquor by the drink. She said that she felt that a lot of people missed that information last time. Ms. Halbrook said that people have access to grocery stores and can buy beer and wine and maybe we cannot have a good restaurant because of it. We should let the people vote on it to see what they want.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mr. Attaway made a motion to adjourn. Mayor Jones seconded the motion. All Council members voted aye. There being no further business and no other persons to be heard, the meeting adjourned at 9:11 pm.

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Carolyn L. Joyner, Town Clerk

APPROVED:

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Randle L. Jones, Mayor